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THE USE OF RESEARCH RESULTS IN TEACHING SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE.

BY- LAWRENCE, RICHARD G.

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BECAUSE THE SUCCESS OF INTERVENTION DEPENDS UPON THE VALIDITY OF THE PROPOSITIONS EMPLOYED, AND BECAUSE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ASSURES VALIDITY BY PROVIDING THE MOST SYSTEMATIC AND RIGOROUS ATTENTION TO PROBLEMS, THE UTILIZATION OF RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT TO SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE. SEVERAL FACTORS LIMIT ITS USE--(1) ALTHOUGH CONCEPTS ARE CLEARLY DEFINED IN RESEARCH, IN SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE THEY ARE OFTEN VAGUE AND GENERAL, (2) RESEARCH MAY NOT YET HAVE DEALT WITH PROBLEMS OF PRIMARY SIGNIFICANCE TO THE PRACTICE SITUATION, (3) SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDE MAY BE INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE CAPACITY TO FORM EFFECTIVE PRACTICE RELATIONSHIPS, AND (4) THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS OF SOCIAL WORK TENDS TO PERPETUATE THE SITUATION. SUGGESTIONS FOR ENCOURAGING RESEARCH AND ITS UTILIZATION ARE--(1) A TEACHER'S ACADEMY, WHICH WOULD PROVIDE TRAINING IN RESEARCH-ORIENTED TEACHING, (2) A NATIONAL CENTER FOR THE CODIFICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF RELEVANT RESEARCH FINDINGS, (3) A PROBLEM CENTERED APPROACH TO LEARNING WITHIN UNIVERSITIES, (4) INTRADEPARTMENTAL AND INTERDEPARTMENTAL TEAM TEACHING, AND (5) DEFINITION OF CRITICAL ISSUES, SUGGESTED RESOURCES, AND MEANS FOR DISCUSSION PROVIDED BY TEACHERS TO STUDENTS. SOME OF THESE SUGGESTIONS SHOULD BE PROMOTED THROUGH THE COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION. (PR)

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The Use of Research Results in Teaching Social Work Practice

Richard C. Lawrence
George Warren Brown School of Social Work
Washington University
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As social work educators, we are concerned with the preparation of students to become effective practitioners of our profession. To accomplish this, we strive to teach content which, when applied in practice, will lead to desired results. A significant belief in our culture and for many of our membership is that research findings can contribute greatly to professional effectiveness. However, informal observation suggests to me that there is no widespread or uniform use of research studies as a primary resource for developing teaching materials.[1] Similarly, it appears that research findings may not figure prominently in the minds of practitioners.[2]

These contentions, if true, should be a matter of serious concern to us. A practitioner's prior experience in school at least should be one of the more important factors which influence his future actions. If research findings indeed are significant to practice, students should learn to utilize them. Consequently, it is my intention in this paper to: (1) briefly review why research may be of potential importance to social work practice, (2) identify some of the reasons why we as educators have not utilized research studies more extensively, (3) offer a limited number of suggestions which, if implemented, might aid in improving the situation.

The Potential Importance of Research

Social workers attempt to exercise control over selected human

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[1] There, of course, are individual exceptions and this presumption itself is a proper subject for systematic study.

[2] Merlin Taber and Iris Shapiro, "Social Work and Its Knowledge Base: A Content Analysis of Periodical Literature," Social Work, X (October, 1965), 106; , Ethel Walsh, "Research and the Teaching of Casework," Journal of Education for Social Work, I (Fall, 1965), 48.

affairs through direct or indirect intervention into those affairs for the achievement of certain purposes.[3] After intervention, it is anticipated that a situation will exist which both is sought and is different from what it would have been without intervention. This anticipation is based on a series of explicit or implicit propositions about the nature of the phenomena intervened in and about the probability that specifiable interventions will result in desired outcomes.[4] Thus, much of our success in maximizing control depends upon the validity of the propositions we employ.

A proposition can be considered valid when it accurately describes, explains and/or predicts.[5] The validity of propositions in the social and behavioral sciences always is relative rather than absolute, however, and it often is difficult to determine which propositions are most valid. The best we can do, accordingly, is to rely on those sources of propositions which give systematic and rigorous attention to the problems of assuring validity.[6] In this way, the errors introduced by faculty perception, conceptualization, measurement and/or reasoning

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[3]Cf., Ernest Greenwood, "Social Science and Social Work: A Theory of Their Relationship," Social Service Review, XXIX (March, 1955), 25; Mary E. Macdonald, "Social Work Research: A Perspective," Social Work Research, ed. Norman A. Polansky (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 4

[4]Propositions are "statements about the nature of reality," including those which "involve a statement of the relationship between two or more concepts." Bernard S. Phillips, Social Research: Strategy and Tactics, (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1966), pp.37-38. The rational character of the anticipation mentioned often is more ideal than actual. Problems associated with this will be discussed later.

[5]Validity implies that the mental picture of objects or relationships corresponds with something that exists in reality independently of the mind and that the measurements of these phenomena are true measures.Cf., Ernest Greenwood, Lectures in Research Methodology for Social Welfare Students (University of California, Syllabus Series, No. 388; Berkeley,University of California, 1960), pp. 103-104; Phillips,pp.159-162.Procedures for determining validity will not be discussed here.

[6]Other criteria for the selection of knowledge for use, such as

are reduced. To achieve this, attention characteristically is given to:[7]

1. Clear definitions of the problem to be studied, the data to be included, and the concepts which identify, classify and organize the data.
2. Provision for actual observations of the phenomena of concern or of specified indicators of them.
3. Utilization of procedures for data collection and analysis which can be described and repeated when applied to comparable data by other researchers in the same or different settings.
4. Public reportage of the findings, the circumstances to which they apply, the procedures by which they were derived, and the confidence with which the findings are supported.[8]

Additionally, if the findings are to be of maximal value for heuristic and applied purposes, they should be cumulative in nature and contribute to theory.[9]

These outlined characteristics are reflected most clearly in scientific research. The human benefits which already have been derived from such research are great:

> The beneficial relation of science to the control and elimination of disease; to the assurance

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relevance, applicability and consistency with our value system, of course must be applied. See Edwin J. Thomas, "Selecting Knowledge from Behavioral Science," Building Social Work Knowledge, Report of a Conference, (New York: National Association of Social Workers, 1964), pp. 38-47.

[7]Cf., Bernard Berelson and Gary A. Steiner, Human Behavior (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1964), pp. 16-18; Greenwood, Lectures....., 8.

[8]An attitude of skepticism is maintained by the scientist.

[9]Theory is a "set of systematically interrelated propositions," Phillips, 42. Throughout the process of research and theory building, the requirements of logic must be met.

> of an adequate and proper food supply; to the prevention of accident; to the maintenance of sanitary conditions, and to other aspects of the physical welfare of our society - all these are obvious and recognized.[10]

Although the benefits derived from research into human behavior perhaps are less obvious, it is averred by some that there is a body of knowledge available for which there is scientific evidence and which potentially can be applied to the solution of human problems.[11] Yet our own contributors to journals generally do not utilize the findings of scientific research, or for that matter, reflect interest or sophistication in procedures expressly designed to increase validity.[12] Instead, we seem to rely on personal experiences, the pronouncements of authorities, wisdom transmitted from generation to generation, and uncorroborated theory as our principal sources for propositions for practice. While this reliance may be understandable in terms of an apparent lack or inaccessibility of scientifically validated and relevant knowledge, and necessitated by the pressing demands of having to act decisively in respect to complex situations, the conclusion must be that we thus may reduce our capacity to achieve our valued goals. It therefore is important to try to assess why this situation exists and discuss what might be done about it.

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[10] Warren Weaver, "A Great Age for Science," Goals for Americans, The Report of the President's Commission on National Goals, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), p. 112.

[11] Cf., Berelson and Steiner, 12; Hans L. Zetterberg, Social Theory and Social Practice (New York: The Bedminster Press, 1962), p. 22.

[12] Taber and Shapiro, passim. It is assumed that the literature of a profession can be used as an index of what is being taught and practiced by members of the profession.

The Limited Utilization of Research

The ideas presented here are derived from a review of the literature, discussions with colleagues and students, and informal observations of what actually goes on in schools of social work. Essentially factors related to the limited use of research findings seem to cluster in three major groupings: (1) lack of conceptual clarity, (2) problems related to existent research findings, (3) structural perpetuation of the situation. The descriptions of them necessarily are brief, and should be considered tentative and by no means exhaustive.

Lack of conceptual clarity

In all scientific endeavors, there is an attempt to achieve accuracy. Consequently, it is imperative that the concepts employed are defined clearly so that they mean, as nearly as possible, "the same thing at all times under stated conditions."[13] In social work, various writers repeatedly have called attention to our need to "plumb words for their particular meaning, for what phenomena they express, and for what their implications for action are."[14] Unfortunately, however, the concepts we employ often are vague and general, and as a professional group we do not profess or exercise concern about the problem.[15] In fact, the situation is

[13] Carle L. Lastrucci, The Scientific Approach (Cambridge, Mass., Schenkman Publishing Co., Inc., 1963), p. 77. A concept is an "idea abstracted from a series of percepts [sense impressions] and symbolized by a word, the percepts having been generated by a series of referents to which both idea and word are linked," Greenwood, lectures....45.

[14] Helen Harris Perlman, Social Work Method: A Review of the Past Decade," Social Work, X (October, 1965), 115.

[15] Taber and Shapiro, Social Work, X, 106; Robert D. Vinter, "Problems and Processes in Developing Group Work Practice Principles," Theory Building in Social Group Work, A Workshop Report of 1960 Proceedings-Annual Program Meeting (New York: Council on Social Work Education, 1960), p. 12.

so alarming that it is described by one person as "devastating."[16]

Obviously, the attempt to get at the core meanings of concepts should be a habit of thought, although, of course, not a substitute for thinking.[17] However, we seem to have had extraordinary difficulties in thinking about what it is that we do. That is, we have not clearly decided upon or conceptualized those situations with which we do (or should) concern ourselves, those goals that we seek through our interventions, those factors (such as our values) which guide or limit our interventions, or (perhaps to a lesser degree) those forms of intervention we employ or prefer. This is very serious. The very first step in any theory building (including a theory of practice) is to decide upon the facts we wish to explain and what it is about those facts which constitute a problem. Boundaries are set in respect to what to include and exclude.[18]

Part of our problem seems to be related to the fact that we have attempted to discover broad, unifying ideas which encompass the whole of our professional concerns and activities. Thus, a considerable amount of attention has been given to such concepts as "social functioning," "realization of human potential," and "concern for stressful situations." Each of these very possibly may be of great value. The difficulty is that the hard work of analysis required to clearly show the connections between them and specific practice situations is yet to be undertaken and

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[16] Mary E. Burns, "Paths to Knowledge: Some Prospects and Problems," Journal of Social Work Education, I (Spring, 1965), 3.

[17] Harry Alpert, "Operational Definitions in Sociology." American Sociological Review, III (December, 1938), 857.

[18] Neil J. Smelser, Theory of Collective Behavior (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 4-5.

communicated.[19] Their use at a very general level can encompass almost all phenomena in the universe; they do not guide us sufficiently in our efforts to know what to exclude and include.

Perhaps at this point, "the boundaries of social work defy precise definition,"[20] and it may be "premature and unwise to settle on too firm a definition of the total field."[21] This, however, does not allow us to escape the requirement of being clear about more limited aspects of the field. We, at least, are going to have to develop a series of discrete classifications or categories of problem situations, desired outcomes, and interventive procedures, that are unambiguous and which describe some of our everyday activities.[22] Until we do, we will not be able to determine that any particular research "fits," or is relevant to practice. When we do, we can discover and apply probabilistic predictions to the classes;[23] these in turn can be incorporated into

[19]Harriett Bartlett, "Social Work Practice," Encyclopedia of Social Work, ed. Fedele F. Fauri, et al. (New York: National Association of Social Workers, 1965), p. 759.

[20]Macdonald, Social Work Research, 16.

[21]Arnold Gurin, "Current Issues in Community Organization Practice and Education," Paper presented at session sponsored by Council on Social Work Education at National Conference of Social Welfare, Chicago, Illinois, May 31, 1966. (Mimeographed), p. 14.

[22]Several authors have called for the development of diagnostic and treatment typologies so that factors and propositions can be organized into logical systems, and analysis rather than concrete description can be promoted. See, Greenwood, "Social Science....," Social Service Review, XXIX, 30-31.....; Lola G. Selby, "Typologies for Caseworkers: Some Considerations and Problems," Social Service Review, XXXII (December, 1958), 341-49. Our progress in this regard hasn't been heartening.

[23]Theodore R. Sarben, Ronald Taft and Daniel E. Bailey, Clinical Inference and Cognitive Theory (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 84.

"if then" propositions which will serve as a basis for our practice.[24]

In the meantime, global ideas, which are relatively vague and convey many different meanings to people, will serve to "sensitize" us to various situations and approaches, and as integrative symbols for the profession.

Problems related to existent research findings

Adequate specification and conceptualization of the range of data which are of concern to us thus is a fundamental requirement for the utilization of research results in our teaching and practice. Given this, we can be guided in our search for relevant and valid research findings.

The question remains, though, as to the extent to which such findings exist. While it is impossible to answer this without having identified more clearly what we are looking for, and reviewed more comprehensively the range of resource materials, several observations nevertheless can be made.

For one thing, there are a number of writers, within and without social work, who believe that much research effort to date has not dealt with problems of primary significance to practice situations. For example, there is comment that the practitioner has to deal with processes of change, but that appropriate models for the analysis of change have not been developed.[25] Similarly, questions are raised about the focus of studies of

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[24] Henry S. Maas, "Use of Behavioral Sciences in Social Work Education, Social Work, III (July, 1958), 68. It is surprising how often we treat concepts as if they are ends of themselves, without recognizing or giving explicit attention to how they are cast in relationship to each other for explanatory, predictive or proscriptive purposes.

[25] Alvin W. Gouldner, "Explorations in Applied Social Science," Applied Sociology, ed. Alvin W. Gouldner and S. M. Miller (New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 8.

social work practice with families[26] and in neighborhood centers,[27] and, it is believed that the significant variables for research in public welfare have not been identified.[28]

This again is a problem of conceptualization, and perhaps it may be accounted for in part by our having given insufficient attention to an analysis of what we actually do or expect to do. There is the possibility that the actual tasks which practitioners do, or to which they might address themselves, are of a different order from the "official" tasks which are dealt with by researchers and academicians.[29] In fact, it appears to me that much of the content provided in the various segments of social work curricula is chosen on an a priori basis without sufficient attention being given to the correspondence of the content to the tasks to be performed.

The putative relevance of such content should be evaluated continuously. It is not enough to assume that the materials are of such generality that their significance is immediately apparent to the practitioner or student. While it is desirable to present a limited number of ideas that are basic to the subject and then to use them "for sampling rather than covering the more specific content necessary to cover them," (Taba) the applicability of these generalizations to the data of concern must be real and demonstrable.[30]

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[26] Scott Briar, "Family Services," Five Fields of Social Service: Reviews of Research, ed. Henry S. Maas (New York: National Association of Social Workers, Inc., 1966), pp. 48-49.

[27] William Schwartz, "Neighborhood Centers," Five Fields...., ed. Maas, 182-83.

[28] Samuel Mencher, "Public Welfare," Five Fields...., ed. Maas, 182-83.

[29] Zetterberg, 41.

[30] Hilda Taba, Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1962), pp. 269-270.
Also there is danger of practitioners and academicians being

Thus, we must be careful to analyze and appropriately conceptualize the tasks that need to be performed and the conditions which are relevant to them.[31] When this is accomplished, we then can see what can be drawn from our storehouse of knowledge that is pertinent and we can launch appropriate research where present knowledge is insufficient. It perhaps is significant that an important outside observer has called for closer relationships between the behavioral and social sciences, schools of social work and social agencies "to provide far better arrangements than now exist for continuous renewal of the field," and for a "far better definition of the tasks to be done in the social welfare field and the skills needed to do them."[32]

Another point frequently made is that the findings of the social and behavioral sciences are not of sufficient generality and validity to be of much value to practice. Others, though,have demonstrated that there are findings which represent important contributions to understanding man.[33] If this latter is the case, it becomes our responsibility to show how these findings are or are not relevant to our jobs.

Important and troublesome problems are related to this, however. Human behavior is complex and it is most difficult, if not impossible, to anticipate in advance all of the factors which may prove to importantly affect the achievement of distant goals which we set for ourselves as

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victimized by "current intellectual fashions" so that "ideas of pertinence and relevance are overlooked and unknown because they are unfashionable." Lewis Anthony Dexter, "On the Use and Abuse of Social Science by Practitioners," American Behavioral Scientist, IX (November, 1965), 25-27.

[31] Gurin, 8.

[32] John W. Gardner, "Remarks," Journal of Social Work Education, II (Spring, 1966), 7-8.

[33] Berelson and Steiner, 12.

practitioners. Predictive propositions are based on clear identification and weightings of factors which affect outcomes. If in the interventive process, we change the weightings of these factors, or add others, the validity of propositions, employed as a basis for action, are seriously compromised.[34]

There are several consequences of this. One is that we may have to place greater reliance on propositions and theories that are close to the data. Many theories of practice thus may be developed which are valid for relatively limited problem situations.[35] With time and further research, it may be possible to supplant these with theories which have wider applicability or greater power.[36]

In a related way, we should limit our expectations for predictable results to goals which are commensurate with our validated knowledge. By doing this, we do not confuse hope or value with expectation or prediction-a confusion which not only perplexes ourselves, but our clients and other observers as well.[37]

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[34] Sarbin, Taft and Bailey, 244-245.

[35] Alfred J. Kahn, "Social Work and the Control of Delinquency: Theory and Strategy," Social Work, X (April, 1965), 8; Henry S. Maas, "Developing Theories of Social Work Practice," Building Social Work Knowledge, Report of a Conference (New York: National Association of Social Workers, 1964), 59.

[36] The value of attempting to reconcile apparently divergent concepts and theories also should not be overlooked. For a discussion of this problem, see Arnold Rose, "Theory for the Study of Social Problems," Social Problems, IV, (January, 1957), 189-99.

[37] David Fanshel, "Sources of Strain in Practice-Oriented Research," Social Casework, XLVII (June, 1966), 362; Mary E. Macdonald, "Reunion at Vocational High," Social Service Review, XL (June, 1966), 189.

This does not mean that we necessarily should abandon our more ambitious efforts or programs. It does mean, though, that we will undertake them because the procedures, actions, or provisions are valued, rather than because the latter lead to predictable results. The problem thus is one of consciously recognizing where "science leaves off and value takes on."[38] Such recognition perhaps would result in different emphases in our interventive efforts and also help us avoid some of the negative effects that follow from making exaggerated claims which we can't fulfill.

Another consequence is that we must give more attention to the progressive, incremental nature of the interventive process. Each practice principle which we utilize is a probabilistic prediction that our intervention will result in an outcome which is different from that which would have occurred without the intervention. Because of the present state of the social and behavioral sciences, the ranges of data to which scientific propositions apply are rather limited and the predicted goals which we seek through our interventions thereby are limited. However, the actual outcomes of the interventions constitute new sets of data to which we try to fit new predictive propositions relevant to the attainment of other goals.

An important problem, of course, is one of developing a strategy for fitting these successive interventions together in a way that they lead to more distant goals, the attainment of which by any particular set of interventive procedures cannot be predicted at the time the intervention

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[38] Jesse Bernard, "The Power of Science and the Science of Power," American Sociological Review, XIV (Oct., 1949),575-584 For excellent discussions of the relationship between fact or validated knowledge and values, see, William E. Gordon, "Knowledge and Value: Their Distinction and Relationship in Clarifying Social Work Practice," Social Work, X (July, 1965), 32-39, and Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behavior (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), pp. 45-78.

is initiated.[39] The possibility of developing a rational, scientific strategy for decision-making in respect to complex situations is hotly debated[40] and we simply do not know enough about the conditions and processes of change. More particularly we do not know enough about how intervention at various stages can progressively narrow the range of what the final product might become.[41] Yet while we bemoan the lack of adequate conceptualization and research in this area, we cannot afford to continue to deny its importance simply because it is complex.

Another problem related to the lack of scientifically validated propositions and theories of wide applicability is that it is beyond the capacities of most of us as individuals, I suspect, to have a comprehensive grasp of the range of discrete findings which are of potential relevance. It simply is difficult to discover and retain information from so many sources in an era of proliferating research. It therefore is most essential that the profession develops some reference system whereby categories of practice problems and the propositions which are relevant to these problems can be available immediately to the teacher and practitioner.

Structural perpetuation of the situation

Obviously, any successful attempt to incorporate scientific findings into our curricula or practice is going to depend heavily on the attitudes and technical qualifications of our personnel. Allusion frequently is made to the fact that we need to raise our intellectual standards[42] and

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[39] Cf., Martin Bloom, "Connecting Formal Behavioral Science Theory to Individual Social Work Practice," Social Service Review, XXXIX (March, 1965), 18.

[40] A provocative example of this is, Charles E. Lindholm, "The Science of Muddling Through," Public Administration Review, XIX (Spring, 1959), 7-18.

[41] For an interesting attempt at analysis of this process, with collective behavior as the case in point, see, Smelser.

[42] Alfred Kadushin, "Two Problems of the Graduate Program: Level and Content," Journal of Education for Social Work, I (Spring, 1965), 40.

to the idea that a great many of us are doctrine rather than research oriented.[43] It also is suggested - and sometimes used as a rationalization, I suspect - that a scientific attitude, and the capacity to practice with conviction and form effective practice relationships, are incompatible or rare in the same person.[44]

Personal and social factors indeed do seem to influence the degree to which scientists are "rationalistic" vs. "empiristic" in their orientations,[45] but I know of no studies which demonstrate that an informed and receptive orientation to science is necessarily associated with poor interpersonal relationships or immobilization in practice. Even if such were the case, we cannot escape the need to utilize science if we are to increase the effectiveness of our interventions.

Other explanations can be found for our relatively unscientific approach in teaching and practice. Especially important is the circular relationship which exists between practice and teaching. Most of us as teachers have come directly from practice where our actions have been based principally on scientifically uncorroborated theory and accumulated wisdom. As indicated before, we generally are not oriented toward research and scientific theory construction.[46]

Thus, when we assume the heavy responsibilities of teaching, we tend to rely on information and sources of information that already

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[43] Elizabeth Herzog, "Research, Demonstrations, and Common Sense," Child Welfare, XLI (June, 1962), 244.

[44] Margaret Blenkner, "Obstacles to Evaluative Research in Casework," Social Casework, XXXI (February, 1950), 56.

[45] Samuel Z. Klausner, "Rationalism and Empiricism in Studies of Behavior in Stressful Situations," Behavioral Science, XI (September, 1966), 339.

[46] Taber and Shapiro, 106.

are known to us. We in turn communicate this to our students who go out to become practitioners, some of whom eventually become teachers. In both practice and educational settings, the models who are prestigeful and dispense rewards do not assume a genuinely scientific stance.[47] Even though courses in research may be included in the curriculum and research studies may be sponsored by agencies, in general they are considered alien to the main matters at hand. Systematic inquiry is not emphasized as an indispensible part of professional equipment.[48]

The hiring of faculty members who value and have sophistication in respect to research-oriented teaching is one way to break the chain. This is difficult, however. On the basis of information available to me, only about a quarter of our faculty throughout the country hold doctorates and the ratio between them and other faculty is not likely to change in the foreseeable future.[49] Moreover, evidence is not available in respect to the relative influence of persons holding doctorates on the preponderance of students in our M.S.W. programs. What are the actual assignments of such faculty and to what degree do they utilize research findings when they teach in the various segments of the curriculum?[50]

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[47]"Models who are rewarding, prestigeful or competent, who possess high status, and who have control over rewarding resources are more readily imitated than are models who lack these qualities," Albert Bandura and Richard H. Walters, Social Learning and Personality Development (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1963), p. 107.

[48]William Schwartz, 183; Vinter, 16.

[49]Daniel E. Jennings, "Characteristics of Social Work Faculty Members," Social Work Education Reporter, XIV (September, 1966), 25.

[50]It is interesting to note that "training in psychological principles seems to have little effect on the accuracy of inferences. This finding appears to be related to the clinician's use of premises that are derived through analogy, construction, or authority, but not through induction." (Emphasis mine.) Sarbin, Taft and Bailey, 266.

Over ten years ago, the suggestion was made that "graduates took from their doctoral experience both theory and skills highly applicable to carrying out traditional research activities and their teaching, but only sensed those elements adaptable and applicable to thinking and doing beyond the narrow confines of their activities".[51] Teacher education not only must produce skill in undertaking research, but it must prepare for research-oriented teaching throughout the curriculum.[52]

The challenge is for schools to find the means to help old and new faculty members continuously prepare for their educational tasks. This cannot be achieved totally by the faculty member as a part of his regular work assignment. Workloads at times are overwhelming, thus leaving little time for self-development. Instead, plans must be built into the system so that appropriate educational experiences and resources can be provided to the teacher, with recognition of the time and effort that is required for this.

Moreover, part of the impetus for change may have to come from without individual schools. It is unreasonable to expect <u>each</u> school, with necessarily limited finances and personnel to develop extensive resource materials and a comprehensive program for the improvement of its faculty. Also, many schools may not move positively on their own, but might take advantage of outside opportunities. There is a certain inertia of the workplace which is attributable, in part, to the collegial system

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[51] William E. Gordon, "A Follow-up Study of Doctoral Students: Relation of Doctoral Study to Subsequent Employment," <u>Social Work Education in Post-Master's Program</u> (No. 3, New York: Council on Social Work Education, 1955), 73.

[52] Eileen Blackey, "Issues in Social Work Education -- New and Changing Demands Made of the Profession," <u>Education for Social Work, 1964 Proceedings: Twelfth Annual Program Meeting</u> (New York: Council on Social Work Education, 1964), 87.

in which matters of curriculum, appointments, tenure and promotion are largely under faculty control. The temptation not to upset the status quo as reflected in course structures and content, in those approved for promotion, and so forth, is very great. No one likes to have the security of the familiar severely threatened. Even within the framework of the larger university, it is more comfortable to assume an insular stance and to form liasons only with those faculty and units which are compatible with our predilections, regardless of the potential benefits that might be derived from wider contacts.

Some Suggestions for Improvement

The problem essentially is one of getting us as faculty and practitioners to assume a more scientific orientation toward our tasks and to rely more heavily on empirically validated theory as a basis for teaching and practice. Several ideas for action within and without the settings of particular universities may be worthy of consideration.

A few years ago the suggestion was made that a teacher's academy be established which would provide training in research-oriented teaching and courses in learning theory, teaching methods, and curriculum building.[53] To my knowledge, nothing has come of this idea to date, but it is my belief that this is of top priority and that every thing possible should be done to implement the plan. I also believe that both

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[53] Blackey, Education for Social Work, 87. Dean Wayne Vasey suggests that several academies should be established on a regional basis.

old and new faculty members should be eligible to attend the academy and that appropriate incentives and sanctions should be applied by the various schools to get faculty participation. Certainly, provision should be made for payment of salary and costs for faculty members as they rotate through the academy.

Similarly, a center should be established which has as its principal purpose the dissemination of relevant research findings to all schools of social work on a regular basis. There are almost insurmountabl difficulties for the faculty member or practitioner, related to the discovery and exchange of information under conditions as they exist now.[54] The reports from a center would cover materials from a wide range of sources and would not only report findings, but would succinctly evaluate the adequacy of the studies, describe the conceptual framework and assumptions inherent in the studies, and specifically identify the relevance of the findings to social work practice. In order to accomplish these ends, models of social work practice inevitably would have to be developed.[55]

The Council on Social Work Education should take the leadership to see that both the teacher's academy and the center get established. It already has sponsored a related effort, the Community Organization Curriculum Development Project, which should have provided valuable experience in launching efforts of a comparable nature. While care should be taken to adequately assess the ramifications of any particular kin

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[54]Burns, Journal of Education for Social Work, I, 15; Ronald Lippitt, "The Use of Social Research to Improve Social Practice," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, XXXV (July, 1965), 665.

[55]For this reason, perhaps more than one center should be established in order to reduce the possibility of a doctrinal approach.

of Council sponsorship and involvement, it is the logical source of initiation.

Within the universities and schools themselves, several things might be considered. Perhaps foremost is the possibility of developing a curriculum which employs a "problem-centered" approach to learning. This does not mean that traditional classifications of social problems necessarily serve as organizing ideas; it does mean, though, that the essential goals sought in respect to "problems-to-be-solved" are identified clearly and that any descriptive or prescriptive materials are demonstrably related to these problems and goals. As a consequence of a clearer delineation of the real data of concern, much putatively relevant but actually irrelevant material could be cut from the curriculum. Moreover, it perhaps would lead to better integration of materials presented in a curriculum than is possible under the present rubrics of human growth and social environment, social work methods, and social policy and services.[56]

A related possibility for change is greater employment of "team teaching". Instead of an instructor being totally responsible for a broad course, he instead only would be responsible for presentation and discussion of materials for which he has special expertise and which are related to a more general problem or idea. This would avoid unnecessary duplication of effort among faculty members and contribute to a dialogue among them which would lead both to better integration of materials and

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[56]Traditional boundaries of curricula and ways of conceptualizing practice may have to be modified. Cf., Perlman, Social Work, X, 177; Edward E. Schwartz, "Some Views of the Study of Social Welfare Administration," Research in Social Welfare Administration: Its Contributions and Problems, ed. David Fanshel (New York: National Association of Social Workers, 1962), 40.

to a more challenging attitude toward the materials presented.

There also might be more extensive use of personnel from the total university in such a participative, team fashion. The success of this would depend in large part on how we define the subject matter under consideration. As social work educators, we cannot - as we sometimes have in the past - delegate or abrogate our responsibility for determining the content and form of participation of persons from without our profession. But, appropriately focussed interaction would importantly broaden the range of knowledge brought to bear on issues of concern[57] and, especially in conjunction with social and behavioral scientists, contribute to the promotion of a scientific approach to problem solving.[58] Additionally, the feedback from heightened interaction might lead to research and theory-development by these scientists, which would have increasing relevance to practice.

In addition to the frequently mentioned ideas about more released time for study and research, the development of colloquia and workshops, and rewards based on scholarly activities as well as on other accomplishments, a final suggestion relates to the expectations made of students. Our job perhaps should be less one of providing extensive facts for students than one of defining critical issues or problems for them, suggesting resources to which they can turn to get the background necessary to deal with

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[57]Leonard A. Duce, "Changes in Higher Education: New Ways of Thinking About Problems," Journal of Education for Social Work, I (Fall, 1965), 14.

[58]Gardner, Journal of Education for Social Work, I., 7.

the problems, and providing the various means by which they can discuss, compare and evaluate their own progress and different ideas and theories. While such an approach does not obviate the need for carefully planned learning experiences, it does provide the opportunity to students for a greater exercise of initiative and responsibility for discovery than frequently is the case.[59] Less time spent in classroom lectures and diffuse discussions, and more in the library and independent investigation might well enhance habits of systematic, scholarly inquiry.[60]

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[59]For discussions of the possible effects of discovery, see Jerome S. Bruner, The Process of Education (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), 20-22; Taba, 126.

[60]However, "Accumulation of knowledge means neither mere fact-gathering nor isolated hypothesis-testing, but thoughtful systematic approaches to meaningful questions leading to conclusive thinking," Ernest R. Hilgard and Gordon H. Bower, Theories of Learning (3rd Ed.;) New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966, 583. For a helpful discussion of the relationship between the lecture, discussion, independent study and other "modes of social work education", see Marguerite V. Pohek, "Toward a Methodology of Teaching," Education for Social Work, 1964 Proceedings, Twelfth Annual Program Meeting (New York: Council on Social Work Meeting, 1964), pp. 149-161.

Summary

The appropriate application of the findings of scientific research to practice situations increases the ability to predict and control. Generally, however, social workers are not research-oriented and utilize research findings very little. Some factors related to this are lack of definitional rigor and inadequate conceptualization of the practice field, failure to relate research effectively to the interventive process and tasks to be performed, and structural perpetuation of an unscientific orientation, particularly through professional education. Some possible means of meeting the problem include the establishment of a teacher's academy, codification and dissemination of relevant research findings through a national center established for that purpose, and selected changes in teaching procedures and personnel and in expectations made of students. The promotion of these ideas through the Council on Social Work Education is indicated.